# Adm. Inman In Command At Consortium

## MCC Research Team Ready for Business

By Michael Schrage
Washington Post Staff Writer

AUSTIN, Tex.—With the skill and savvy that once made him Washington's consumate high technocrat, retired admiral Bobby Ray Inman has turned his talents from the classified to the proprietary.

The man who managed this country's most sophisticated national security technologies—he ran the National Security Agency from 1977 to 1981 and served as deputy director of the CIA—has glided smoothly to the private sector, where he now bids to become the unofficial U.S. ambassador of innovation.

"Much to my surprise, I haven't needed to adapt my management style at all," said Inman, with a disarming deployment of his gaptoothed grin. "The management skills I've acquired through trial and painful error are serving me well here."

Inman is chairman and chief executive officer of MCC—the Microelectronics and Computer Technology Corp. research consortium—which presents itself as the American computer industry's response to Japan's highly publicized "Fifth Generation" computer challenge for global supremacy in the information-processing industry.

The creation of Control Data Corp. Chairman William C. Norris in 1982, MCC was seen as new cooperative venture by American companies to achieve breakthroughs in areas of basic research crucial to the evolution of information technology. The idea was that member companies would finance establishment of the venture, underwrite its research programs, and lend it some of their top scientists and engineers. Norris argued that a combined approach would prove

more cost-effective than any one company's individual efforts in this risky and capital intensive industry.

In many respects, MCC is the forerunner and model of what may prove to be the next generation of industry research and development—a cooperative of companies that share first-level research and development efforts that later will become proprietary products. MCC has about 300 employes and an annual budget approaching $100 million but has not disclosed what is being spent on specific programs.
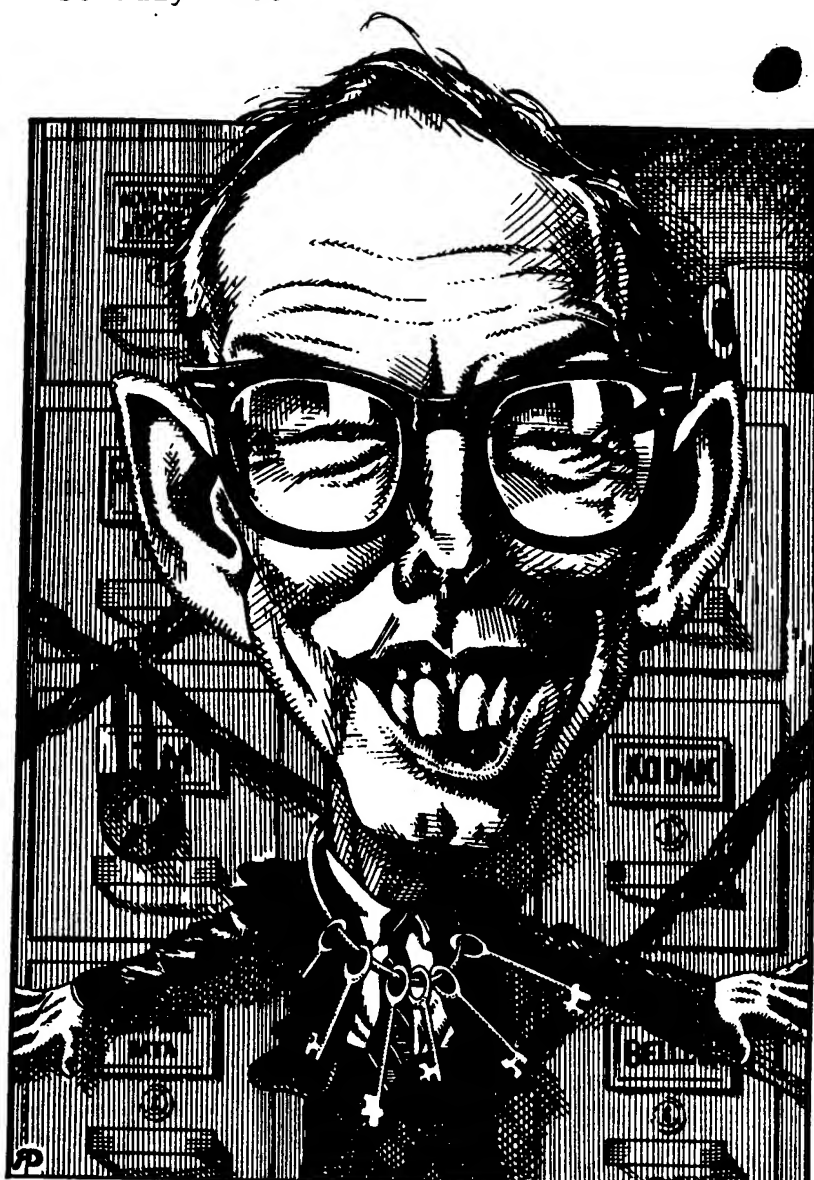
"Mid- and small-sized companies simply don't sustain long and broadscaled research in an industry where the prospect for technological surprise is high," Inman said.

Inman, who had retired from public service in July 1982, was assid-

uously wooed by Norris and other MCC members. He formally came on board in January 1983.

A superb politician with an ability to implement an agenda, he surprised and annoyed many of the members of his board by consistently rejecting many of the researchers initially offered up by the member companies as simply not good enough.

Moreover, although MCC's seven research programs—which range from semiconductor packaging to new computer architectures to parallel processing—originally were supposed to be run by scientists from MCC member companies, it turns out that six of the seven are independent and highly re-



RETIRED ADMIRAL BOBBY RAY INMAN, BY RAY DRIVER FOR THE WASHINGTON POST